



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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Passengers: part of the ride

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While the driver has most control over the safe operation of a vehicle, passengers can help make sure everyone arrives safely at their destination.

"Passengers share a responsibility for literally being another set of eyes and ears for the driver," said Lt. Col. James Donovan, director, Driving Directorate, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. "When they're tuned into what's occurring inside and outside the vehicle, it increases spatial awareness for the driver, and that makes for a safer trip."

Passengers who actively and passively participate in driving can help reduce the number of Soldiers injured or killed in private motor vehicle accidents.

"It makes a lot of sense that passengers should be active about reminding the driver of hazards like other motorists, pedestrians near the roadway, debris in the road or anything that could cause an accident," Donovan said. "They can also provide passive support for safe driving just by observing their surroundings, even if there isn't anything to mention to the driver."

Soldiers learn teamwork from their first day in uniform and practice it every day on duty. That training is valuable on a trip as well, whether they're headed to lunch or on a road trip with their buddies or Family.

"That teamwork in a vehicle, be it military or civilian, is similar to the aircrew coordination required inside an aircraft," Donovan said. "A group focused on the same goal — safe motoring — is better and safer than just one person doing it."

The list of things that lead to safe driving always begins with seat belts.

"Safety belts are your most effective form of protection should a crash occur, so buckle up every trip," said Janet Frolescher, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. "Also, an estimated 25 percent of crashes involve cellphone use. Never use your cellphone while driving, and if you're a passenger in a car where the driver is using their phone, ask them to hang up for everyone's safety."

Frolescher also urged passengers to take an active role in ensuring their driver stays sober.

"Refrain from using alcohol or other drugs behind the wheel," Frolescher said. "Always designate a non-drinking driver or arrange for alternate transportation."

For more information on driving safety, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.